

among his foreign dispatches, for in it he treated a most delicate subject in a firm and unyielding and yet conciliatory spirit. As had been agreed upon, a copy was sent to Genet himself, and Jefferson accompanied it with an explanatory note of most considerate tone.

This, as far as it concerned Jefferson, closed the Genet incident, with the exception of one further communication. Genet had impudently sent to the President his instructions, implying his desire that they should be laid before Congress. Jefferson returned them, plainly informing him that the communications which were to pass between the Executive and Legislative branches could not be a subject for his interference. This was Jefferson's last official act as Secretary of State.

It had for nearly two years been Jefferson's purpose to retire from public life. At first, he set as the date the end of Washington's first term, but at each suggestion of his purpose to withdraw, Washington had, by pleading considerations of the public good as well as his own personal desires, prevailed upon him to remain. This he had consented with some reluctance to do until the Freneau matter, with the personal bitterness it engendered in the Cabinet, confirmed Jefferson's disinclination to a position which called for daily contest with an aggressive and untiring opponent. Considerations of personal pride, however, arrested his carrying out his purpose. In January, 1793, he wrote his daughter, Mrs. Randolph: "My operations at Monticello had been all made to bear upon the close of this session of Congress; my mind was fixed on it with a fondness which was extreme, the purpose firmly declared to the President when I became assailed from all quarters with a variety of objections. Among these it was urged that my retiring, just when I had been attacked in the public papers, would injure me in the eyes of the public, who would suppose I either withdrew from investigation, or because I had not a tone of mind sufficient to meet slander. These representations have for some weeks past shaken a determination which I thought the whole world could not have shaken." Jefferson's resolution to resign was not again broached, until the unpleasant events connected with the Genet